



Stress and cardiovascular disease: Lessons from Katrina

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Abstract:

Add to death and taxes the certainty of disasters. Each day disasters occur, affecting millions of people each year. Whether natural or human-made, the extreme and overwhelming forces of disaster can have far-reaching effects on individuals, local communities, and national stability. Though disastrous events may last from seconds to days, effects can continue from months to years. In the case of the 1972 Buffalo Creek dam collapse in West Virginia, for example, when survivors were examined 14 years later using standard diagnostic criteria, 25% had post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). According to estimates from the National Center for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, approximately 25-30% of individuals exposed to unusually traumatic events such as disasters, combat, violence, and accidents develop chronic PTSD or other psychiatric disorders. The center adds that the literature examining the role of traumatic exposure is definitive: regardless of the traumatic stressor, "dose-response" is a strong predictor of who will likely be most affected (Slide 1). In general, according to the National Center for PTSD, the greater the perceived life threat, the greater the personal injury, and the greater the sensory exposure to distressing sights, sounds, and odors, the more likely PTSD will manifest. Victims are not the only ones at risk. Helpers, including medical, morgue, and security personnel and rescue, fire, and safety workers, also may experience either direct or indirect traumatization. Family members of victims, too, are at risk for what has been referred to as vicarious traumatization - relationships with traumatized individuals can create much distress for others.

Source: <http://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/569342>

Resource Description

Exposure :

weather or climate related pathway by which climate change affects health

Extreme Weather Event

Extreme Weather Event: Flooding, Wildfires

Geographic Feature:

resource focuses on specific type of geography

Ocean/Coastal, Urban

Geographic Location:

resource focuses on specific location

Climate Change and Human Health Literature Portal

Global or Unspecified

Health Impact:

specification of health effect or disease related to climate change exposure

Cardiovascular Effect, Injury, Mental Health/Stress

Mental Health Effect/Stress: Stress Disorder

Intervention:

strategy to prepare for or reduce the impact of climate change on health

A focus of content

Mitigation/Adaptation:

mitigation or adaptation strategy is a focus of resource

Adaptation

Population of Concern: A focus of content

Other Vulnerable Population: Prior psychiatric problems

Resource Type:

format or standard characteristic of resource

Policy/Opinion

Resilience:

capacity of an individual, community, or institution to dynamically and effectively respond or adapt to shifting climate impact circumstances while continuing to function

A focus of content

Timescale:

time period studied

Time Scale Unspecified

Vulnerability/Impact Assessment:

resource focus on process of identifying, quantifying, and prioritizing vulnerabilities in a system

A focus of content